



July 10, 2013



The Honorable Rob Bishop
U.S. House of Representatives
123 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jason Chaffetz
U.S. House of Representatives
2464 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515



The Honorable Chris Stewart
U.S. House of Representatives
323 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515



Dear Representatives Bishop, Chaffetz and Stewart:



As representatives of national organizations promoting responsible motorized recreation we write to thank you for inviting our organizations to participate in the process of developing federal legislation aimed at addressing many of the issues that have plagued public land management in Utah. While we will work with local partners, some of whom speak on behalf of some of the undersigned organizations, to develop separate specific recommendations for the management of the public lands in the six affected counties, we believe it is important to support your efforts at a national level as well.



It is clear that local stakeholders need to have maximum input into land use decisions. Those who live, work and recreate on or near public lands simply have the most to gain, or lose, from these processes. Recently, it seems that major land use decisions have trended toward massive-scale limitations on multiple uses without thorough vetting with the affected public. In your home state of Utah the Grand Staircase Escalante was designated as a National Monument with very few local stakeholders being aware the designation was forthcoming, let alone having the opportunity for meaningful input. Now there are calls from some to designate 1.4 million acres in the Canyonlands as a National Monument, despite ongoing efforts at local collaboration.



Further, in every session of Congress legislation to designate enormous swaths of public lands in Utah and across the United States is introduced: bills like H.R. 1187, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act (NREPA) and H.R. 1630 and S. 769, known as the "Red Rocks" bills. NREPA would designate 23 million acres of public lands across five western states as wilderness and the Red Rocks bills would designate 9.1 million acres in Utah as Wilderness. It is this sort of heavy-handed, top-down approach that poisons the debate and makes meaningful collaboration at a local level more difficult than necessary. These bills are sponsored by Members who represent districts from several states more than 1,000 miles away. NREPA was introduced by a Member from Manhattan, and is co-sponsored by her colleague from just outside of Boston. The Red Rocks bills were introduced by Members from Illinois and New Jersey. These Members simply cannot know better than those who live, work and recreate near or on these lands, or those whose livelihoods depend on access to these lands, what is best for these rural areas. It is time for a change.



This is why we are appreciative of the approach you are taking in Utah. All stakeholder groups are being given an opportunity to highlight what is most important to them. Conversely, meaningful collaboration means that, at some point, stakeholders will have to acknowledge what is not as important to their interests. Getting to this point will be difficult and require commitment, trust and time. It is our belief that the results will be worth the effort, as legislation that has the support of the broadest array of local constituencies has the

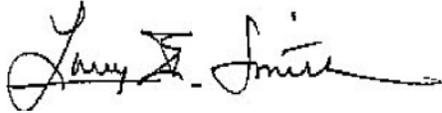


best chance of becoming law, and of providing for the unequivocal environmental protection of the area's outstanding natural wonders while providing for sustainable multiple uses.

Lastly, we would like to push back against the artificial sense of urgency that always seems to permeate calls for massive National Monument and Wilderness designations. While there certainly are areas of public lands that are deserving of special designation/protection, these lands are already protected by the relevant land management agency that oversees them. Officials from the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, and other agencies already have the necessary management tools to work with stakeholders to ensure that special places are protected and that multiple uses are provided for. This means that these areas are or can be protected while local collaborative processes play out.

We look forward to engaging in the process you have started and working with your staffs as you set about the difficult, but rewarding task of developing truly bottom-up legislation to protect resources and sustainable multiple uses. We intend to work with other Members of Congress from other states to establish similar processes and we hope to be able to point to your resulting legislation as a model for other Members to follow. Please do not hesitate to contact us if there is any way we can be helpful.

Sincerely,



Larry Smith
Executive Director
Americans for Responsible Recreational
Access



Wayne Allard
Vice President
Government Relations
American Motorcyclist Association



Chris Manthos
Executive Director
American Watercraft Association



Greg Mumm
Executive Director
BlueRibbon Coalition



Duane Taylor
Director, Federal Affairs
Motorcycle Industry Council



Russ Ehnes
Executive Director
National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation
Council



Fred Wiley
Executive Director
Off-Road Business Association



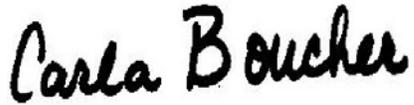
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